

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CI

SUBJECT: CHILEAN COUNCIL OF STATE SWORN IN

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 5297, (B) SANTIAGO 4745, (C) SANTIAGO 0045

1. THE 18 MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE TOOK OFFICE JULY 14. THEY WILL CONVENE NEXT WEEK TO BEGIN ORGANIZING. REF A TRANSMITCD THE NAMES OF THE MEMBERS. AS INDICATED, ONLY EX-PRESIDENT EDUARDO FREI DECLINED THE NOMINATION.

2. ALL RADIO AND TV STATIONS BROADCAST THE CEREMONY, WHICH FEATURED SPEECHES BY PRESIDENT PINOCHET AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL ALESSANDRI

.
THE PRESIDENT DEVOTED TWO-THIRDS OF HIS SPEECH TO THE FAILURE OF PAST INSTITUTIONS WHICH MADE THE CREATION OF A "NEW DEMOCRACY" IN CHILE IMPERATIVE. ALTHOUGH "THE COURSE OF EVENTS WILL DETERMINE THE NATURE AND FREQUENCY" OF COUNCIL MEETINGS, THE PRESIDENT PROMISED HE WOULD ALWAYS ASK IT TO CONSIDER "MATTERS OF TRUE IMPORTANCE FOR THE COUNTRY."

3. ALESSANDRI, IN A SPEECH FILLED WITH ALLUSION TO HIS PAST PRESIDENCY, ECHOED PINOCHET'S VIEW THAT THE OLD SYSTEM HAD FAILED, LEAVING "NO ROOM FOR TIMIDNESS" IN QUESTIONING THE SIBBOLETHS OF THE PAST. SPECIFICALLY HE CALLED FOR LIMITATIONS ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH TO PROTECT AGAINST SLANDER; ESTABLISHMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR HOLDING ELECTED OFFICE; LIMITS ON THE IMMUNITY
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OF ELECTED OFFICIALS; AND ENACTMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR LABOR

LEADERS. IN ONE BRIEF PARAGRAPH, ALESSANDRI REGRETTED EX-PRESIDENT FREI'S DECISION NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COUNCIL.

4. BOTH PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS LEFT NO DOUBT THAT THE CREATION OF NEW INSTITUTIONS WOULD TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME. ALESSANDRI ANTICIPATED CRITICISM FROM SOME SECTOR THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL WAS NOT MOVING FAST ENOUGH. BUT THE "EVIDENT POLICY IS TO MOVE GRADUALLY TO ESTABLISH THE NEW INSTITUTIONALITY."

5. COMMENT: AS REF B STATED, WE CANNOT SAY NOW WHETHER THE COUNCIL WILL EVOLVE INTO A MERE RUBBER STAMP OF DECISIONS ALREADY TAKEN, OR TAKE ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN. HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT SUCH CONSULTATIVE BODIES CAN DEVELOP IN UNPREDICTABLE WAYS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH CLOSELY WHAT PRESIDENT PINOCHET DESCRIBED AS "THIS FIRST STEP TOWARD THE LEGISLATIVE BODIES OF THE FUTURE."
POPPER

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